

## Message Text

SECRET

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45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 W  
----- 100240

O 201245 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3147

INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

COMUSMACV

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 2058

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: U. S. PW' S IN LAOS

REF: STATE 050572

1. SINCE REFTEL ARRIVED VIENTIANE AFTER RLG HAD  
TABLED ITS MILITARY PROTOCOL, AND IN VIEW OF THE SHORT  
TIME WE HAVE BETWEEN NOW AND MARCH 28, DCM MADE FORMAL  
CALL ON LPF VIENTIANE REP SOTH PHETRASY AFTERNOON  
OF MARCH 20 TO CONVEY TO HIM SUBSTANCE REFTEL.

2. DCM SAID THAT USG EXPECTS THE RELEASE OF US/ FOREIGN  
PRISONERS CAPTURED IN LAOS BY MARCH 28 IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH US/ DRV UNDERSTANDING. DCM EMPHASIZED THAT,  
UNLIKE PREVIOUS DISCUSSION WITH SOTH, USG THIS TIME  
IS ASKING FOR THE ACTUAL RELEASE OF U. S. PW' S  
CAPTURED IN LAOS BY A SPECIFIC DATE AND NOT RPT NOT  
MERELY REQUESTING INFORMATION ON THE IDENTITY OF THE  
AMERICAN PW' S. DCM STRESSED THE URGENCY AND SERIOUSNESS  
OF TODAY' S DEMARCHE.

3. SOTH PHETRASY SAID THAT HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY TRANS-  
MIT SUBSTANCE OF USG' S DEMARCHE TO SAM NEUA. CHOOSING  
HIS WORDS CAREFULLY, SOTH THEN EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL  
OPINION THAT VIETNAM AGREEMENT CONCERNS ONLY U. S. AND  
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VIETNAM. HE SAID THE TWO LAO SIDES HAVE THEIR AGREEMENT WHICH ALSO ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THE QUESTION OF EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS. HE OPINED THAT PW' S CAPTURED IN LAOS WILL BE RELEASED IN LAOS AND THOSE CAPTURED IN VIETNAM WILL BE RELEASED IN VIETNAM. HE DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION ANY TIME FRAM E FOR THE RELEASE OF THE U. S. PRISONERS.

4. DCM THEN MENTIONED KEEN U. S. DISAPPOINTMENT WITH SAM NEUA' S MESSAGE REPORTED VIENTIANE 1977. SPECIFICALLY DCM ASKED WHAT SAM NEUA MEANT BY STATEMENT THAT: " AMERICANS ALREADY KNOW THE NAMES AND TOTAL NUMBER OF US POW' S CAPTURED IN LAOS." SOTH REPLIED THAT THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE PATHET LAO DO NOT HOLD ANY PW' S IN ADDITION TO THE NAMES GIVEN TO USG IN PARIS ON FEB 1. DCM REPLIED THIS WAS CONTRARY TO THE IM- PRESSION SOTH PHETRASY HAD GIVEN IN UPI ARTICLE IN FEB ( VIENTIANE 1294). FURTHERMORE, WE ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT OTHER AMERICAN PW' S CAPTURED IN LAOS, IN ADDITION TO THE NAMES GIVEN TO US IN PARIS, ARE STILL ALIVE. DCM REITERATED WHAT HE HAD TOLD SOTH LAST SATURDAY THAT AS SOON AS PHOUMI VONGVICHIT RETURNS TO VIENTIANE HE WOULD DEMAND TO SEE HIM REGARDING THE RELEASE AND INFORMATION ON U. S. PW' S.

5. COMMENT: FOR FIRST TIME DCM CAME AWAY FROM MEETING WITH IMPRESSION THAT LPF RE IN VIENTIANE WAS FOCUSING ON THE DILEMMA CREATED BY HANOI' S ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPATRIATION OF ALL US PW' S IN INDOCHINA AND LPF CLAIM THAT VIENTIANE AGREEMENT REGULATES RELEASE OF PW' S CAPTURED IN LAOS. WE NOTE THAT SOTH STRESSED RELEASE OF PW' S IN LAOS RATHER THAN WHEN THIS WOULD OCCUR.

6. AS FOR CHANGING THE LANGUAGE IN THE MILITARY PROTOCOL, REGARDING PRISONER RELEASE ( REFTEL), WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THIS PROVISION DEALS NOT ONLY WITH U. S. PW' S BUT WITH PW' S OF ALL NATIONALITIES. WE WILL ADDRESS OURSELVES IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE TO THE STATUS OF THE PARA DEALING WITH THIS SUBJECT IN THE DRAFT MILITARY PROTOCL. IN ANY CASE, THESE AGREEMENTS WILL NOT BE SIGNED FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND WHAT REALLY COUNTED AT THIS TIME WAS TO CONVEY TO PATHET LAO OUR MESSAGE THAT WE EXPECT THE RELEASE OF U. S. PRISONERS IN LAOS  
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BEFORE MARCH 28. THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED BY TODAY' S

DEMARCHE.  
GODLEY

SECRET

\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS  
\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:**  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 20 MAR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Subject:** U. S. PW' S IN LAOS  
**TAGS:** CASC, MOPS, PFOR, LA  
**To:** SECSTATE WASHDC  
SS INFO BANGKOK  
COMUSMACV  
WHITE HOUSE  
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